

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

STEP Task Force Recommendations April – July 2008

Shown with Member Input/Comments from June 5 Teleconference

Regulation Change Required

1. Need to make STEP more easily accessible by private employers and the grantee administration portion not so burdensome. (Also shown as #3 on Policy Change Required list; which Eden Larson recommended via 6/9/08 email combining #2 and #3 from Policy list to read):
 - *The grant process should make funding accessible to private employers through a modified grant process, creating a tier of grant funding for businesses seeking to train and retain employees in a competitive environment and streamlining administrative processes to more effectively capture information documented by employers in the normal course of business. Note: Employees in question would be underemployed and/or meet funding criteria based on wage rates.*
2. Improve Administration and Reporting for STEP – Reporting requirements are cumbersome and difficult. A lot of interest in funding for new reporting system to upgrade MIS. (Also shown as #4 on Policy Change Required list)
3. There should be different tiers for STEP funding.

Diana Cartier offered via 6/6/08 email these comments regarding the Tier System:

- *As someone that has been working for a large training program and writing and administering the grant for it, I have to agree that there is a need for the tier system. Although administering the grant is just a part of my job I know that it is very time consuming and something that would be very costly for a small for profit company to be burdened with.*

I would like to suggest that the department review the process of the Key Person Training Program that was initiated a few years ago as an OJT Program with the Job Centers, our Apprenticeship Program and the STEP office. This was a program that was targeting “key” areas of our industry that were very specialized that our apprentices would not normally be trained in during their initial training with the JATC. Working with the employers we were able to identify those areas of need and the employers agreed to hire them through this

Key Person OJT program. The ultimate goal was to have those apprentices placed eventually as journeyman with those companies because of this very specialized skill. There were a number of things that were unique about this program: (1) A major reduction in the amount of paperwork normally signed by an employer for the OJ; (2) All the training records were kept in our apprenticeship files. We monitored the success of the training and made certain the training being done was as agreed upon and the employer reporting was correct to be forwarded to the job centers; and, (3) The job centers did all the MIS input and dispersed the STEP funding back to the employer on a monthly basis. I believe that some aspects of this program could be used in developing a program that would work for the smaller employer training programs.

4. Purpose of STEP should be reviewed – Purpose of STEP should be revised to reflect current needs. STEP was created in 1989 as a pilot project during tough economic times in Alaska to try to retain people in Alaska. Is the purpose of STEP the same today, as it was in 1989? (Also shown as #4 on Statute Change Required list)
5. Need to Update STEP Statute – Purpose of STEP should be reviewed, revised, and updated and should contain language that is more focused on direct results. The STEP Statute may be too broad, and may need to be more focused on the purpose of the program. (Also shown as #5 on Statute Change Required list)
6. We have too many goals and too many measurements. Program needs to be clear, with focus, and demonstrable, cleanly measurable results that we can show legislature. (Also shown as #9 on Policy Change Required list)
7. Does AWIB need to become more effective and given more authority? (Also shown as #7 on Statute Change Required list)
8. Customer satisfaction contractor (Clearwater) should contact employers instead of participants (or maybe both?). (Also shown as #8 on Policy Change Required list)
9. Moving STEP Under AWIB – The AWIB has been revitalized and moving the administration of STEP under the AWIB will comply with the Statute and improve accountability. The Statute allows AWIB to set performance measures for STEP, including amount charged for administrative costs. (Also shown as #8 on Statute Change Required list)